

The impetus given to the use of instrumental music in Scottish churches by the visit of Moody and Sankey to Scotland in 1873–74

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It is more than twenty years since the Reverend Ian A. Muirhead wrote a paper for the *Records of the Scottish Church History Society* entitled “The Revival as a Dimension of Scottish Church History”.¹ He stated that “revival is a dimension of Scottish church history which deserves to be taken seriously”. Revivals, he said, “continually refuelled workers and office-bearers”.² The Reverend Muirhead wrote of many well known revivals including the famous Cambuslang Wark of 1742, the Kilsyth revival of 1839, and the revivals which became known as the Second Evangelical Awakening during the years 1859–1861. However, it is his reference to the first visit of Moody and Sankey to Scotland during 1873–74, of which he said that “it is at least arguable that this was, for Scotland, the revival to end revivals” that is of particular interest and one of the reasons for this piece of work.³

Having fairly recently completed some research into the effect of the first visit of the American Evangelists, Moody and Sankey to Scotland, I found Ian Muirhead’s words “the revival to end revivals” most appropriate, especially with regard to the use of instrumental music in public worship, which is the subject of this article.

Moody preached the gospel and Sankey sang the gospel; each was an evangelist in his own right and the one complemented the other. Moody was a brief but effective speaker and neither his addresses nor his prayers were long. The quality of Moody’s addresses was

¹ Ian A. Muirhead, “The Revival as a Dimension of Scottish Church History” in *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, xxi (1981).

² *Ibid.*, 195.

³ *Ibid.*, 196.

considered by many to be more valuable than the more polished elegance of some home orators. He liked to use conversational language and anecdotes, which were usually followed by Sankey who took up Moody's theme in his musical contribution.⁴ The names of Moody and Sankey were synonymous: one was rarely heard without the other. The prejudices which had existed for years whenever an attempt had been made to introduce instrumental music into worship, disappeared during the Americans' visit. A paper presented at the time by Professor Blaikie of the Free Church's New College in Edinburgh, to *The British and Foreign Evangelical Review* on the subject of "The Revival in Scotland" described positively Sankey's part in the mission. "If singing of this kind forms no part of our ordinary service, the sooner it began to do so the better", he commented.⁵

Moody was convinced that Sankey's singing of the gospel "was doing as much to bring people to Christ as those who preached Christ".⁶ Sankey's singing was rendered in a sympathetic style, and he accompanied himself by playing on a little cabinet organ. In the preface to his autobiography, Sankey wrote: "I have often seen vast audiences melted and swayed by a simple hymn when they have been overcome by a powerful presentation of the gospel from the pulpit".⁷ Sankey had more than once invited anyone who could sing to consecrate their voices to Jesus by singing of His love not only at special services, but in drawing rooms, at sick beds and at mothers' meetings.⁸ By these means Sankey's songs were reaching a much wider audience, and, as a result, his part in the mission was assured an important place as the words and music of his hymns spread and became more popular. Reports

⁴ There is a book of Moody's anecdotes published by J. E. Hawkins (London) undated, in the New College Library of Edinburgh University, together with a book of Moody's addresses edited by himself and published by Morgan and Scott (London) undated.

⁵ *The Christian*, 23 July 1874.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 23 December 1873.

⁷ Ira D. Sankey, *My life and sacred songs* (London, 1906), 18.

⁸ *The Christian*, 16 November 1874.

commented that “the wonderful popularity of Mr Sankey’s hymns is quite a phenomenon” and that “nothing is so popular as Sankey’s hymns”.⁹ It was said that his hymns were heard in a variety of places, including drawing rooms, workshops, Sunday schools and prayer meetings. They were also sung by itinerant street singers with concertina accompaniment, by fishermen in their boats and by mothers as lullabies.¹⁰ The evangelists had come a long way since their arrival in England, immediately prior to their Scottish visit, where it was difficult to get people to sing because they were not used to Sankey’s kind of song.¹¹ By popular demand, the British Broadcasting Corporation still transmits programmes that relate to the visits of Moody and Sankey to this country in the nineteenth century.¹²

There is no doubt that Sankey made an important contribution to the success of the campaign. It is also generally accepted that their biggest success was in Scotland, where, as Findlay puts it “Moody undoubtedly came closer than at any time in his career to igniting a revival in the classic sense in which Christians had viewed that phenomenon up to the nineteenth century”.¹³ To understand the importance of Sankey’s musical contribution, it must be remembered that the use of organs was in its infancy in Scotland and unknown to many of the Scottish people at the time of Moody and Sankey’s arrival. The general opinion seemed to be that the use of instrumental music in church worship was unnecessary and unconstitutional. In the circumstances, it is necessary to know something of the background which had prohibited its use in Scottish churches. The historical facts that led to the exclusion of musical instruments from worship and the

⁹ *The Christian*, 23 July 1874.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Ira D. Sankey, *My life and sacred songs*, 18.

¹² Personal correspondence with the B.B.C., 1996. The latest “Songs of Praise” programme devoted to Moody and Sankey’s visit to this country was transmitted on 31 January, 1999.

¹³ James F. Findlay, *Dwight L. Moody: evangelist, 1837–1899* (Chicago, 1969), 157.

consensus of opinion regarding its use, prior to the visit of Moody and Sankey, help to explain the success of Sankey's musical contribution to the campaign.

Prior to the Reformation, the traditional use of Latin had caused discontent among the ordinary people as this had prevented them from taking part in services. No concessions were made, either to the use of the vernacular or music. With the coming of the Reformation, and the restoration of the Psalter in their own tongue, the metrical psalms were firmly established in worship by the end of the sixteenth century.¹⁴ However, as Gordon Donaldson put it: "Concentration on the metrical psalms was ultimately to have a deplorable effect on both the political and musical tastes of too many Scots ... from whose churches musical art was to be exiled for generations".¹⁵ For almost three hundred years mainly metrical psalms were used. As Calvin had decreed, there was no room for instrumental music in the Reformed Church. Unaccompanied singing led by a precentor became the normal practice.

The first recorded incident of a musical instrument being used in a Presbyterian Church was in St Andrew's in Glasgow in 1807, where a small chamber organ had been introduced by the minister. The Lord Provost of the city reported this incident to the presbytery who ruled that the use of music in worship was considered to be contrary to the law of the land and constitution of the Established Church.¹⁶ Nevertheless, by mid-nineteenth century, a wind of change was blowing.

The Disruption of 1843 had led to rivalry between the main Presbyterian churches. The Established Church had to reconsider its strategy following the departure of so many ministers and members to the newly formed Free Church. It became necessary, therefore, for the national church to try to make its worship "appeal to a broader cross-

¹⁴ *Dictionary of Scottish church history and theology*, ed. N. Cameron (Edinburgh, 1993), 613.

¹⁵ Gordon Donaldson, *Scotland: James V–James VII* (1st publ. Edinburgh, 1965), 269.

¹⁶ *Dictionary of Scottish church history and theology*, 616.

section of the population".¹⁷ It was also thought that an improvement in services was necessary in order to curtail the movement of the upper classes to the Episcopal Church.¹⁸ An additional contributory factor was that of increasing industrialisation. This had resulted in a considerable number of people settling in large urban areas that were in stark contrast to the closely knit rural areas whence many of them had come. A change in the pattern of church life was almost inevitable in order to meet the needs of the rapidly changing population. Following the Disruption, there had been a moderation of doctrinal views and a more progressive atmosphere seemed to pervade the air. Liberal-minded churchmen within the Established Church expressed the wish to see more toleration, and the need to avoid more controversy. They were in favour of improving church services in order that they would make more appeal to the population. Presbyterian worship, on the whole, was seen as being of an unsatisfactory nature.¹⁹ The singing was said to be dismal beyond belief.

A storm of controversy arose in Edinburgh when Dr Lee, minister of Greyfriars Church, introduced a harmonium to accompany the praise in 1863. An earlier fellow pioneer of organ use had been Dr Marshall Lang who had introduced an instrument in the newly formed Anderston Church in Glasgow in 1860. However, it was Dr Lee's case which set the scene for what became "the organ question" for many years to come. Dr Lee had not only introduced instrumental music to accompany congregational singing, but he "invited the congregation to kneel for prayer and stand to sing and he read prayers from a printed book ...".²⁰ He was accused of conducting an Anglican-style service. This event resulted in an assembly committee being formed to consider innovations in worship. The lack of support it received against change, including the use of instrumental music, reflected the changing attitude

¹⁷ Duncan B. Forrester & Douglas M. Murray (eds.), *Studies in the history of worship in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1984), 80.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 83.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

of the Church. This in turn led to ministers being asked "to ensure that worship was conducted decently and in order".²¹ Subsequently an act was passed which stated that the regulation of worship in parishes was to be left in the hands of the presbyteries and the churches. However, the "Pirie Act" effectively licensed the use of organs in Church of Scotland congregations "subject to the supervision of the presbytery concerned".²² The Act was intended to check progress in reform of worship, but in effect did the exact opposite. The decision meant that would-be reformers had not only to convince their congregations of the desirability of the use of organs in church, but their ministerial colleagues as well. In the circumstances, presbyteries were reluctant to interfere in matters of worship unless congregations were seriously divided. By the end of the century, Lee's once daring innovations were common practice in most parts of Scotland, "their acceptance hallowed by the effective use of the organ made by the American Evangelists Ira D. Sankey and Dwight L. Moody in their triumphant tour of 1874".²³

The form of worship in the Presbyterian churches in Scotland changed considerably during the second half of the nineteenth century. "The move away from Calvinistic orthodoxy was seen particularly in the impact made by the American evangelists, Moody and Sankey in 1874 and in the welcome given to the *Sacred Songs and Solos*".²⁴ The use of hymns helped worshippers to express their personal faith and enabled them to sing about religious matters such as the resurrection and the Holy Spirit. People wanted to be able to take part in services. The singing gave them a sense of joyful participation rather than just sitting and listening to sermons which were often dreary and of considerable length. Sankey's songs were aimed at the people in the street, with all their worries and cares. His songs helped to give those people who were overwhelmed with troubles, the courage that was needed to come to

²¹ Duncan Forrester & Douglas Murray (eds.), *Studies in the history of worship in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1984), 91.

²² *Ibid.*, 84.

²³ William Ferguson, *Scotland: 1689 to the present* (Edinburgh, 1978), 339.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 90.

terms with their situation. It was also said that "although in origin, products of American revival made popular by the visits of Moody and Sankey, hymns such as 'Hold the Fort' and 'Dare to be a Daniel' conveyed a rhetoric of heroism, persecution, purpose and defiance, when placed in a trade union setting".²⁵ "Music in worship is a means, not an end" wrote John Curwen, Congregational minister, musician and publisher of the era, and inventor of the tonic sol-fa system of teaching sight singing. In the context of mission work, its aim was to ignite a flame in the hearts of the worshippers. Curwen said: "These songs touch the common throng, they match the words to which they are sung and carry them".²⁶

Sankey's *Sacred Songs and Solos* was already one of the best sellers of the day before the evangelists left this country. "Mr Moody ... used the service of praise more extensively than any other man in the nineteenth century", wrote Sankey.²⁷ It was while their visit to Britain was still in its infancy, in Newcastle, that Moody and Sankey first realised the drawing power of these songs. The first publisher approached by Moody, with a view to having Sankey's first collection of songs printed, turned down the request. However, through his friend, R. C. Morgan, Moody then approached the publishers, Morgan and Scott, who agreed to published the first edition of *Sacred Songs and Solos*. This original publication grew to be a collection of twelve hundred sacred songs and solos and is still being published today. Morgan and Scott are now part of the present Harper-Collins group. Moody and Sankey set up a trust fund to be administered by businessmen who were to be responsible for the distribution of royalties accrued from the sale of *Sacred Songs and Solos*. "Vast money flowed into the hymnbook fund".²⁸ The evangelists did not want to take the

²⁵ John Wolffe (ed.), *Religion in Victorian Britain*, vol. v, Culture and Empire (Manchester, 1997), 95.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 290 and quoting John S. Curwen, *Studies in worship music* (London, 1885), 39-42.

²⁷ Ira D. Sankey, *My Life and Sacred Song*, 43-44.

²⁸ John C. Pollock, *Moody without Sankey* (London, 1963), 161.

royalties for themselves. They did not want to give anyone the opportunity of saying that they were profiting from preaching the gospel. Moody did not seem to care about money. His son, Paul, considered that his father was "scared of money", and that he (Moody) remembered the struggle it had been to give up his business. When Moody gave up his business career, "he had discarded the means of a fortune".²⁹ Sankey, on the other hand, enjoyed having money. He had been brought up in comfort and he liked to look smart. Sankey had also given up a good salary to join Moody, but he, too, signed away his earnings.³⁰ Much of the hymnbook money seems to have gone into helping to finance such projects as the rebuilding of Moody's church in Chicago, the schools he founded in his hometown of Northfield and eventually the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. In 1884, Moody wrote a letter to a friend in which he talked about wealthy businessmen and went on to say "I have had more money to give away to the cause of Christ during the past ten years from the Hymn Book fund than the wealthiest of them".³¹ Sankey stated in his autobiography that he was able to arrange for the erection of a Y.M.C.A. building for his home city as a result of money raised from the sale of "Gospel Hymns". He was also able to buy a site for his old church, which his mother and father attended until their deaths.³² This is evidence of the popularity of Sankey's hymnbook.

At the time of the Great Awakening, singing was used to spread the gospel. By the time Moody and Sankey came on the Scottish scene, it was already a well-known fact that people found pleasure and comfort in expressing their feelings in song. The added accompaniment of music added a new dimension to the singing and it became even more

²⁹ J. Pollock, *Moody without Sankey* (London, 1963), 160.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 161.

³¹ James F. Findlay, *Dwight L. Moody*, 319n. and 369 (Findlay had access to personal papers of the Moody family in America).

³² Ira D. Sankey, *My Life and Sacred Songs*, 5. (Pollock, in *Moody without Sankey*, states that *Sacred Songs and Solos* could not be published in America because of copyrights, but that *Gospel Songs* was its American counterpart.)

pleasurable, comforting and popular. Sankey's songs soothed and comforted his listeners and he had the knack of singing his way into people's hearts. Part of the reason was that his diction was so clear that every word could be heard. Another contributory factor was that the words were easily understood and the simple choruses easily learned by heart. The emotional appeal of the music also played its part. This combination of the preaching of the word through simple and easily remembered words and choruses, was an immediate success. Any critics were silenced as Sankey's singing, and his use of the little organ on which he accompanied himself, was quickly accepted. Moody believed that the singing was just as important as the sermon. He felt that the song itself provided a vital service. He had seen people moved by the power of music, just as he (Moody) had been when he first invited Sankey to join him at their first meeting in Indianapolis. Although Moody appreciated the power of the music over the listeners, and acknowledged the help it gave to him as an evangelist, he was not musical. He was "unable to recognise one tune from another" but he could see the mood of worship which the music created.³³

When Moody and Sankey toured Scotland in 1873–74, their revival affected all branches of the Scottish Presbyterian churches, but especially the Free Church. This was the church that provided the focus for future developments in biblical criticism, worship and liturgy, but it was the national Church that led the way in innovations, that is, the national Church introduced the use of organs earlier than the Free Church.³⁴ The popularity of Sankey's *Sacred Songs and Solos* and the increasing demands for the use of hymns within Scottish Presbyterianism, was a move towards a more warm and emotional style of worship. It was a departure from the traditional form of Calvinism. The use of instrumental music in church worship had been the subject of a continuing controversy that had been going on for years within the

³³ J. Pollock, *Moody without Sankey*, 75.

³⁴ Gerald Parsons (ed.), *Religion in Victorian Britain*, i, Traditions (Manchester, 1988), 133.

Scottish Churches. The use of a harmonium during Moody and Sankey's visit, helped to influence this situation by preparing the way for more widespread use of the organ in Scottish churches. *The Christian* reported that "Mr Sankey is not merely a singer, but a singing evangelist", and after the initial stir, the use of hymns and organ was accepted in most circles.³⁵ Sankey's musical contribution altered the future pattern of Scottish worship with regard to music. The tunes associated with many of the revival hymns were compared to those of the music hall. "Sankey catered for their taste", wrote Bebbington. "His style was valued by Moody because it was so close to that of the music hall".³⁶ In troubled times, when mortality rates were high, especially among children, many of these hymns expressed the feeling of weariness, hope and longing, of many people, for a better world. Sankey appeared to be able to reflect this in his singing. The simple tunes had a fervency that often appealed to the less well educated members of the population, and the choruses could be easily remembered by many people who were unable to read. Sankey normally sang in a gentle and sentimental style that was destined to appeal. He rarely used a military style. The hymns were judged by their effect and Sankey's singing with its emphasis on the importance of the words, was preaching the gospel through song.

After the American Civil War, a new kind of popular music had taken off. "It proved as easy to combine the sentimental and the religious in peacetime as it had been to combine the sentimental and patriotic in wartime".³⁷ Moody carried forward the terminology of the Civil War (Campaign) just as Billy Graham did, when he adopted Eisenhower's word "Crusade", during his visit to this country in the mid-twentieth century.³⁸ Graham was accompanied on this visit by the

³⁵ *The Christian*, 18 May 1874.

³⁶ D. W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in modern Britain: a history from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London, 1989), 174.

³⁷ John Kent, *Holding the fort: studies in Victorian revivalism* (London, 1978), 217.

³⁸ J. Pollock, *Moody without Sankey*, 163.

soloist, George Beverly Shea. When Graham was offered the opportunity to conduct a Sunday night broadcast over a local Chicago station in the 1940s, he had asked Shea to assist him. At this time, "Shea, a graduate of Houghton Bible College in New York, was also working as a soloist and announcer for the Moody Bible Institute's radio station". The Graham-Shea programme became a local success.³⁹ During the Victorian period, people probably heard more new hymns and tunes than ever before. Interestingly, songs of hope was one of the categories into which music hall songs were divided. These songs were an inspiration to soldier on despite difficulties in an age of evangelicalism, when theatres were frowned upon, but struggle was the byword of many. The following words from a popular song illustrate this point:

... then do your best for one another;
 making life a pleasant dream.
 Helping a worn and weary brother;
 pulling hard against the stream.⁴⁰

The similarities between the secular and religious choruses are easily seen.

Kent referred to *Sacred Songs and Solos* as "the best musical best seller of its generation in religious circles ... Sankey's music was the key to the Americans' success".⁴¹ Bebbington stated that "it was Sankey who took the religious world by storm with his *Sacred Songs and Solos*".⁴² These views coincide with what I have learned from my research into Moody and Sankey's mission of 1873–74. Moody was the driving power, but he realised the importance of the song. Drummond

³⁹ William G. McLoughlin, Jr., *Modern revivalism: Charles Grandison Finney to Billy Graham* (New York, 1959), 487.

⁴⁰ Roy Busby, *British music hall: an illustrated who's who from 1850 to the present day* (London, 1976), 37.

⁴¹ J. Kent, *Holding the Fort*, 215, 273.

⁴² D. W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 174.

and Bulloch also gave voice to the musical aspect of the mission. In their book, *The Church in Victorian Scotland (1843–74)*, it is stated that “the playing of Ira D. Sankey in the unimpeachable setting of D. L. Moody’s campaign of 1874 was probably the strongest factor in reconciling many Scottish Presbyterians to the organ as his *Sacred Songs and Solos* had similarly done for hymns”.⁴³ In his introduction to Sankey’s autobiography, the Reverend Theodore L. Cuyler wrote that Sankey preached by singing the gospel. He was a pioneer in his field who introduced a style of popular hymn.⁴⁴

Sankey kept his collection of sacred songs and solos in a scrapbook. He would put any poem that he thought would make a good revival hymn into this scrapbook and use the information whenever he thought the occasion demanded it, for example the “Ninety and nine”. Sankey wrote the music for the “Ninety and nine” while visiting Edinburgh in 1874. He had discovered a poem by chance in a weekly newspaper which he bought for one penny in a railway station in Glasgow before joining the Edinburgh train. He cut the poem from the paper and put it in his scrapbook as he thought the words would make a good revival hymn and he composed the tune on the spot as he sang the words at a subsequent meeting in the Free Assembly Hall. He had been asked to sing a solo on the subject of “The Good Shepherd”, and having sung the twenty-third psalm on a number of occasions because of its popularity, he decided to use the “Ninety and nine”, and so a new hymn was born.⁴⁵ The writer of the words of this hymn was an Elizabeth C. Clephane of Montrose (deceased) whose sister happened to be attending this particular meeting. Sankey later received a letter from this woman in which she told him of the amazing coincidence and of how pleased she was to hear him use her sister’s words for this hymn. This hymn, which became an inspiration to many, was to become one of Sankey’s favourites, and it was even requested by Moody at the laying of the

⁴³ Andrew L. Drummond & James Bulloch, *The Church in Victorian Scotland 1843–1874* (Edinburgh, 1975), 188.

⁴⁴ Ira D. Sankey, *My life and sacred songs*, Introduction, iii–iv.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 248.

corner stone of the new Congregational Church at Northfield, Massachusetts (Moody's birthplace).⁴⁶

Sankey had been collecting and writing up the history of hymns and anecdotes connected with their composition and their use by Moody and others, as well as by himself.⁴⁷ The title of one of his most popular pieces "Hold the Fort" entered the language as a common expression.⁴⁸ It as written by Philip P. Bliss, who was inspired by Sherman's message during the Atlanta Campaign in the Civil War, "Hold the Fort: I am coming".⁴⁹ Moody's opinion of the value of the singing was very decided, according to A. P. Fitt, who wrote a biography of his father-in-law. Moody, he said, felt that the great majority of people liked singing and proposed to make it a prominent feature of all his services. "It helps to build up your audience – even if you do preach a dry sermon. If you have singing that reaches the heart, it will fill the church".⁵⁰ Singing, he said, did at least as much as preaching to impress the word of God on people's minds and its importance had grown upon him since he first started preaching. He always encouraged good, lively singing in the church and in the home.⁵¹ Gerald Parsons stated that "none of the great names in late nineteenth century Nonconformity, Congregational, Baptist, or Presbyterian ... escaped the inspiration of the Moody–Sankey revival".⁵²

⁴⁶ Ira D. Sankey, *My life and sacred songs*, 248.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, and preface, vii.

⁴⁸ J. Coffey, "Democracy and popular religion: Moody and Sankey's mission to Britain, 1873–1875" in Eugenio F. Biagini (ed.), *Citizenship and community: liberals, radicals and collective identities in the British Isles, 1865–1931* (Cambridge, 1996), 93.

⁴⁹ J. Pollock, *Moody without Sankey*, 75.

⁵⁰ A. P. Fitt, *The Life of D. L. Moody* (Chicago, n.d.), 60.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁵² G. Parsons (ed.), *Religion in Victorian Britain*, i, Traditions, 232, quoting Ian Sellers, *Nineteenth-Century Nonconformity* (London, 1977).

There are countless reports of Sankey's singing "with touching pathos and power ... sung not only with the voice but from the heart".⁵³ This quotation comes from a report at the beginning of their Edinburgh campaign. The report also mentioned especially Sankey's articulation, observing that "every syllable is distinctly heard in every part of the largest church or hall".⁵⁴ These attributes were repeated over and over again throughout the Scottish tour, and ensured that the singing held a prominent place in the service. Sankey's autobiography tells us that "Jesus of Nazareth passeth by" was his most effective solo, and that the demand for copies of the words was so great that a large number had to be printed for distribution. It was his first solo in Edinburgh and he wrote of "the intense silence that pervaded that great audience during the singing of this song...". He felt assured that even "human hymns" sung in a prayerful spirit were indeed likely to arrest attention and convey God's truth.⁵⁵ Sankey had enjoyed the hospitality of the minister and hymn writer, Horatius Bonar, while in Edinburgh, and he knew that much had been said and written against the use of "human hymns" in public worship, and even more against his "kist of whistles" (the term used to describe his small cabinet organ).⁵⁶ However, Moody and Sankey both realised that the twenty-third psalm and the old hundredth would be more acceptable introductions to their meetings at the start of their Scottish tour. These psalms represented common ground for all denominations and the decision to use them proved to be a successful inspiration that paved the way for the introduction of new hymns and music.

While the evangelists were in Dundee, it was reported that "when the words of the singing of Sankey fell upon the listeners, it was like the falling of dew on the thirsty corn ...".⁵⁷ The Reverend Robert Murray McCheyne of Dundee was a minister who showed an early interest in

⁵³ *The Christian*, 28 December 1873.

⁵⁴ *The Christian*, 28 December 1873.

⁵⁵ Ira D. Sankey, *My Life and Sacred Songs*, 19, 21.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁵⁷ *The Christian*, 29 January 1874.

congregational singing. For a whole summer he had made an effort to train his congregation to sing. Apparently the tune "Newington" was known in the parish as "McCheyne's tune".⁵⁸ Music, in the shape of song, had been a source of inspiration during the Second Evangelical Awakening in Scotland. Hymns were full of deep meaning to thousands of converts.⁵⁹ The wind of change, which was beginning to blow into Presbyterian thinking regarding the use of instrumental music, was given a tremendous boost by Sankey during this Scottish tour. Orr wrote that "the greatest effect of the 1859 Revival upon British hymnology was its introduction to the hymns of the American Gospel Singers that burst upon Britain like a flood during the Moody and Sankey Campaigns in the 1870s".⁶⁰ These hymns were eagerly absorbed by the masses in Britain at that time, and many remain firm favourites at the present time. Prior to their visit to London, the influence Moody and Sankey were exerting in other parts of the country appeared to extend to the metropolis where their hymns had already become familiar.⁶¹

"Between 1873 and 1880, working-class mission congregations urged the kirk sessions of their parent middle-class churches to 'sanction the introduction of instrumental music' in the form of the harmonium popularised by Ira Sankey".⁶² Sometimes a refusal to meet with such a request led to the decline of a mission church. Callum Brown in *Religion and Society in Scotland since 1707* wrote of a Glasgow Free Church congregation which tried to withdraw Sankey's

⁵⁸ William Norrie, *Dundee celebrities of the nineteenth century: being a series of biographies of distinguished or noted persons connected by birth, residence, official appointment, or otherwise, with the town of Dundee; and who have died during the present century* (Dundee, 1873), 85.

⁵⁹ James Edwin Orr, *The second evangelical awakening in Britain* (London, [1949]), 256.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 260.

⁶¹ James R. Moore (ed.), *Religion in Victorian Britain*, iii (Manchester & O.U., 1988), 274.

⁶² Callum G. Brown, *Social history of religion in Scotland since 1730* (London, 1987), 160.

hymnbook from its mission station in 1899, only to be forced to change its mind as the result of a revolt among the worshippers.⁶³ While the use of instrumental music in worship gathered momentum after the visit of Moody and Sankey, it was not until 1883 that there was a majority vote for its use in churches belonging to the Free Church. By 1900 there were few Scottish Lowland churches without some kind of organ and this instrument soon became the recognised accompaniment to congregational praise in Scottish churches throughout the twentieth century.⁶⁴

There can be no doubt that Moody and Sankey's initial revival campaign in Scotland had a tremendous effect on the use of organs in Scottish worship. Sankey made his own impact. Without his help, it is doubtful if the campaign would have been so successful. However, it is unlikely that either partner could have effected such success on his own. Their partnership was unique. "Mr Moody is very fortunate in having such a colleague as Mr Sankey" reported *The North British Daily Mail*. "He has enriched evangelistic work by something approaching the discovery of a new power".⁶⁵ In a few weeks hymns had become known to many "in a way no-one dreamed of before Mr Sankey came to sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs".⁶⁶ Sankey rendered an inestimable service to the Church of Christ by the compilation of *Sacred Songs and Solos*.⁶⁷ The format used by Moody and Sankey was to become the pattern for future revivals, when preachers would not think of being without their musical accompaniment. However, as already said, this appeared to be the revival to end revivals, as after Moody and Sankey, there were no fresh innovations. Their revival campaign was a revival with a difference, and the difference was the

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 181.

⁶⁴ J. Inglis, "The Scottish Churches and the Organ in the nineteenth century" (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Glasgow, March 1987).

⁶⁵ *The Christian*, quoting the *North British Daily Mail*, 28.5.1874.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 28 December 1873.

⁶⁷ E. J. Goodspeed, *The Wonderful Career of Moody and Sankey in Great Britain and America* (New York, 1876), 56.

use of instrumental music. There can be little doubt about the popularity and success of the hymns and musical accompaniment as an almost universal part of Christian worship during the late Victorian era. Sankey "did not argue the lawfulness of instrumental accompaniment in divine worship, but he superseded the argument by making people feel that organs were consistent with devotion and helpful to it".⁶⁸ Every revivalist since the time of Moody and Sankey has used the help of music. Evangelism and music were to become part and parcel of the religious scene as the main churches grew closer together once more, until eventually most of them joined forces in 1929. A small proportion of the Free Churches remained outside the union.

As already mentioned, the British Broadcasting Corporation has transmitted television programmes relating to the visits of Moody and Sankey to this country, and the latest was broadcast on 31st January, 1999. Following an earlier televised broadcast in January, 1995, the Corporation received "a huge positive response from viewers with many people writing in requesting a repeat".⁶⁹ As a result, the B.B.C. made further programmes of "Songs of Praise" entitled "Hymnformation" that were broadcast during the summer of 1995 and included Moody and Sankey songs.⁷⁰ During one of these programmes a survivor of the *Titanic* told of how she and her mother survived the sinking of the ship, although her father had died in the tragedy. She remembered that the orchestra had been playing the hymn "Nearer my God to Thee" as the ship was sinking. This hymn was included in the original compilation of *Sacred Songs and Solos* that consisted of one hundred and forty-seven hymns.⁷¹ On 11th August, 1996, a programme was transmitted from Fraserburgh, in the north-east of Scotland, celebrated for its strong tradition of gospel singing that grew up in response to the harshness of the fishermen's lives. On this occasion, six out of the eight hymns sung were from Sankey's *Sacred Songs and*

⁶⁸ J. Wolfe (ed.), *Religion in Victorian Britain*, v, 290.

⁶⁹ Personal correspondence with the B.B.C., 24 September 1996.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ Information from one of the early hymnbooks, n.d.

Solos.⁷² In an Independent Television programme broadcast in 1996, the naturalist David Bellamy said he had been brought up on Moody and Sankey hymns, and that "it was worth going to Church just to sing these hymns".⁷³ This programme was about a Victorian world of spiritual song, street evangelism and catchy tunes which were being sung in parlours for family entertainment. There is currently a range of compact discs available on which songs made popular by Sankey are recorded by a choir at a Methodist church in Cornwall.⁷⁴ The use of organs undoubtedly brought some order and improvement into the singing of praise in Scottish churches.

Although the names of Moody and Sankey are synonymous and *Sacred Songs and Solos* is often referred to as "The Moody and Sankey Hymnbook", Moody was not involved in its compilation. Moody recognised its use in connection with his revival work and it was he who personally financed its first publication. Sankey composed some of the tunes, but it was essentially a compilation of hymns, which he recognised as having the power of appeal to listeners. It was an inspired vision to have this collection published as its popularity obviously knew no bounds. Writing in 1906, Sankey said that "this book ... has now grown into a volume of 1200 pieces and up to the present time has had possibly the largest sale of any book except the Bible".⁷⁵ Although Scholes did not accord Moody and Sankey the possession of literary or musical taste in his *Oxford Companion to Music*, he did say that there was "at least as much to be said for the jigging rhythms, facile melodies and commonplace harmonies of the music of street and mission-hall evangelism as there is for the use of cheap sentimentalities in the more 'respectable' places of Christian activity".⁷⁶ Scholes also acknowledged the fact that the "gospel" or mission hymn came "into world

⁷² Personal correspondence with the B.B.C., 24 September 1996.

⁷³ *Radio Times*, 29 September 1996, "Heavenly Voices".

⁷⁴ I presently have two of these discs in my possession, bought December 2000 in Glasgow, although the date of the recording is given as 1992.

⁷⁵ Ira D. Sankey, *My Life and Sacred Songs*, 19.

⁷⁶ Percy A. Scholes, *The Oxford Companion to Music* (Oxford, 1955), 183.

prominence with the work of the Evangelist Moody and his colleague, Ira D. Sankey ... during the 1870s, 1880s and 180s", and claims that their success was achieved "largely by the means of music".⁷⁷ This fact comes through over and over again.

Moody's achievement cannot be divorced from Sankey's part in the campaign, however. Neither evangelist could have achieved the results, which they obviously did, without the help of the other. Moody was able to inspire people by his personality and he was able to raise funds at the drop of a hat. It could also be said that Sankey would have been unable to reap the benefits of such success without the driving force and influence of Moody. There can be no denying that the remarkable success of Sankey's *Sacred Songs and Solos* kept the distinctive characters of Moody and Sankey alive, long after Moody's sermons were forgotten. It is obvious that Sankey's hymns have been kept alive by popular demand. Apparently Cliff Barrows and George Beverly Shea found that the American gospel songs had lost none of their mass appeal when Billy Graham conducted his London campaign in 1954.⁷⁸ In his chapter, "Ira D. Sankey and The Growth of Gospel Hymnody" in *Patterns of Protestant Church Music*, Robert Stevenson asks by what criteria shall the greatness of a musical composer be measured? He suggests that among the items included could be the number of copies of music sold, recognition during his own lifetime, articles in newspapers, and he reflects especially on the greatness of a composer in the sacred field. We have already discovered that Sankey composed comparatively few of the tunes in his volume of twelve hundred *Sacred Songs and Solos*, but we also acknowledge the fact that he compiled this popular collection and made it famous by using it during his initial visit to this country, with Moody, in 1873–74. Therefore, as Stevenson stated, "Ira D. Sankey, unrecognised as he is by historians of serious music, deserved an important niche in the musical pantheon".⁷⁹

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 508.

⁷⁸ Friedrich Blume, *Protestant church music: a history* (London, 1975), 685, 690.

⁷⁹ Robert M. Stevenson, *Patterns of Protestant church music* (Durham N.C., 1953), 149.

A verse from one of Longfellow's poems, "The Singers", seems to sum up the overall scene. Longfellow was part of this Victorian scene, which must be viewed in the context of its time, to be understood:

God sent his singers upon earth
With songs of gladness and of mirth,
that they might touch the hearts of men,
and bring them back to heaven again.⁸⁰

Blairgowrie

⁸⁰ Henry W. Longfellow, *Poetical Works* (Oxford, 1914), 191.